



MEETING NOTES

Meeting Notes are not official until voted on by the Board of Education at its following Regular Meeting.

- A1 President called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.
- A2 Members present: Ms. Arnold, Mrs. Byler, Mrs. Crowley, Mr. Moog, and Mr. Perry.

NOTE: *Portions of the meeting's audio recording were difficult to decipher; therefore, this document may contain several incomplete sentences or inaccuracies. Additionally, some of the participants' names may be misspelled.*

B PROGRAMS / PRESENTATIONS

- B1 Embrace, Empower, Inspire Award Winners: Jeremy Jones and Karen Vanvleet

Mr. Stewart: We have two Embrace, Empower, Inspire Award winners tonight. I believe Mark Dudgeon will introduce Jeremy Jones, our first winner. So, Jeremy, if you come on down.

Mr. Dudgeon: Good evening, board. On behalf of the Business Office and the Operations Department at Hilliard City Schools, I'm proud to present this month's Embrace, Empower, and Inspire Award to Mr. Jeremy Jones, our Grounds Coordinator. As many of you may know, Jeremy has been an employee of Hilliard City Schools for almost 24 years or so, and was a Groundskeeper right here at Darby High School. And upon the retirement of our longstanding Grounds Coordinator, Archie Armentrout, earlier in 2025, we were very proud to promote Jeremy from within to our Grounds Coordinator. Just a brief nomination letter to share with you this evening on behalf of Jeremy's grounds crew and one of the groundskeepers. The nomination reads that Jeremy is the hardest worker I've ever known at Hilliard City Schools. Extremely generous with his time and expertise, a true leader. Jeremy, on behalf of everybody, congratulations.

Mr. Stewart: Jim Smalley will introduce our second award winner, Karen Vanvleet.

Mr. Smalley: Good evening, board. Thank you for the opportunity to not only celebrate a great employee of JW Reason Elementary School, but also an amazing employee in the district. This is just such an awesome opportunity that the district provides, highlighting not only the best teachers but also some of the best people we have. And I get the opportunity to highlight Karen Vanvleet. She was nominated by a parent. And the nomination reads, "Mrs. Vanvleet has been nothing but great, an amazing role model and instructor for my daughter." I wish I could show a picture, but I participated in our kindergarten screening, and that can be a dicey event for many new kindergartners. One of them was melting down, and I looked over and saw Karen had one in her arm while she was doing an assessment with another kid at the table. Karen is just an amazing person. She helps out in the community and at the RELC food pantry, and she is everything we aspire for our teachers to be and a role model for all of our youngest learners. It's an honor to celebrate Karen Vanvleet.

Mr. Stewart: This is true every month, and it's especially true this month. Not only do we get to recognize people who are really good at their job, but also people who are really good people. So, I want to congratulate them both and give them permission to slide out the back door when done taking pictures.

C ROUTINES

- C1 The agenda is correct, as presented.
- C2 The Board of Education adopted the agenda as presented.
- C3 The Board of Education approved the December 2025 Treasurer’s Report.
- C4 The Board of Education approved the minutes from the following meetings:
 - a. December 8, 2025 – Regular meeting minutes
 - b. December 8, 2025 – Meeting notes

Mr. Moog: Just a question on voting since Sarah and I weren’t on the board at that time. Should we abstain from voting?

Mr. Stewart: That is certainly appropriate.

D PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Board of Education appreciates citizen interest in meetings of the board. This place on the agenda is set aside to hear comments from visitors. When called, please go to the microphone so that remarks may be clearly heard and recorded. You must give your name and limit comments to three minutes. Comments must be respectful and professional in nature. Board members may or may not ask questions or make comments. No board member has the power or authority to act for the board; therefore, no response from an individual board member should be interpreted as an official action of the board. Portions of this meeting are being recorded.

Maxine Irvin

Hello everyone, and thank you for listening to my statement. My name is Maxine Irvin, and I have been a resident of Hilliard City School District for 35 years. Both my children graduated from Hilliard Davidson High School.

Public schools are under attack by both the Ohio and federal legislatures in a number of ways. One way is by the EdChoice Voucher Program. Another is Ohio House Bill 486, the Charlie Kirk American Heritage Act. Another is Ohio Senate Bill 34, Enact the Historical Educational Displays Act. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

The Franklin County Common Pleas Court has already found that EdChoice vouchers are unconstitutional. House Bill 486 and Senate Bill 34, in my opinion, are also unconstitutional. House Bill 486 stresses allowing public schools to teach the positive aspect of Christianity while ignoring the harm in some aspects of Christianity, and it does not treat any other religious beliefs the same way. Senate Bill 34 lists 10 historical documents, of which at least four must be displayed in the classroom. Besides the US Constitution and other documents important to our country, it also lists the 10 Commandments. Though the 10 Commandments are good to follow, they are religious in nature and belong in a church, not in public school.

This is just three of the multitude of bills and issues that are attacking our public schools. Ohio formed common schools, now called public schools, and require that they serve all the children in Ohio. They also require that no one religion is promoted above all other religions. These are not political issues. These are a direct attack on public education in Ohio. Joining the Vouchers Hurt Ohio lawsuit is one particularly important way for Hilliard Schools to fight back against the destruction of public education.

I have been talking with people about how harmful EDChoice vouchers are. Most have heard of vouchers, but very few are aware of how they are harming our children and how much they cost taxpayers. This is not surprising since the legislature wants to siphon off our education tax dollars and send our money to their supporters; they do not want anyone to know about it. Therefore, we need you, our school board, to speak up and educate our residents so they understand how EdChoice vouchers are bankrupting public education. Where once Ohio schools were a shining example of what could be done with public education. If we do not change our current course, public education as we know it will cease to exist. Thank you.

Brittany Alexander.

Good evening. My name is Brittany Alexander. I teach sixth grade at Station, and I am here this evening speaking on behalf of more than 1200 members of the Hilliard Education Association. As the HEA Vice President, I can share with you all that just a little over an hour ago, our representative council of the Hilliard Education Association voted overwhelmingly to approve a statement regarding undocumented children's rights to access a K through 12 public education.

While it's a bit long for me to read, I am going to give you highlights of the four paragraphs, actually, the topic sentence, as an ELA teacher. So here they are. The Hilliard Education Association believes that all students have a constitutionally protected right to a public education. HEA believes that schools, houses of worship, and other community connection points should be off limits for immigration enforcement. And the Hilliard Education Association believes we have a professional and moral responsibility to keep our students safe. Finally, the Hilliard Education Association believes denying any child the opportunity to attend public school will ultimately hurt us all.

So, I am here now asking for your show of support for our students and for our staff. We're asking that the board pass a resolution acknowledging that it is the right of every child, regardless of their immigration status, to access a free public K through 12 education, and to show with words and actions that the district welcomes and supports all students. We want you to ensure that students who reside within the district boundaries, regardless of their immigration status, can safely access a free K through 12 public education. We want to denounce any federal immigration law enforcement activities on or around district property and transportation routes that could harmfully disrupt our learning environments, significantly interfere with the ability of our students, and declare the district a safe zone for our students.

Thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

Cindy Rieman

First of all, I'd like to congratulate the new board members, and looking forward to coming every month talking about the same thing, probably. My name is Cindy Rieman, and I have been a teacher here. I've been a teacher in Pennsylvania. I have two daughters who are raising their children in a public school education. And that's what I would like them to do, and I hope that they can continue to do it.

My concern is, as Maxine said, about the vouchers, and worst case scenario, in my mind, I picture four or five years from now that our public schools are down to the very neediest children that cannot even use a

voucher because they have to make up for the difference with their own pocket. When I read that billions of dollars are going out of our public school systems, it's very disturbing. I had the chance on Saturday to work with two young boys from Weaver at the Hilliard Food Pantry. We were just chatting, and I asked them what they liked about Weaver. And they started going on and on about this fantastic equipment they had. The 3D printers, the laser printers, just great stuff that I hope that my grandsons can enjoy when they get up to be that age. And then I started thinking, if these billions of dollars keep increasing and going out, what are they gonna cut? They cut the fluff, so to speak, which really is what makes Hilliard so great, I think, is the extras that you do and have always done for students.

I think that you're missing the boat if you don't get on voucher train, so to speak. As a taxpayer and with the way the property tax is being challenged and changed, I can just see a lot of people saying I just voted for a tax levy. What's the problem here? Why can't you finance these programs? And I think you have to be able to think, what are you gonna say to them? For the cost of about \$2 per pupil, we decided not to go ahead with helping our other fellow educators in Ohio to fight the vouchers, and now we see that there are billions of dollars just going to private and parochial schools.

I personally believe that this is unconstitutional, and I'm not alone in that, obviously, with more than 300 school districts signing on to it. I also think that as we've been taught as children sometimes, you have to do what is the right thing, even if it hurts you a little bit. And I'm thinking that's a very small amount of money in order to support our students and our fellow educators. Thank you.

Debbie Cochran

Hello, my name is Debbie Cochran. I'd like to congratulate Tony and Sarah on their election to the board, as well as Kara on her reelection. Happy to have you all on board. I know you are all familiar with the Vouchers Hurt Ohio, VHO Lawsuit. Many of us in the Hilliard community are advocating for you, Hilliard's elected board members, to vote to join over 330 school districts now, including 11 in the central Ohio area, in this lawsuit.

I'd like to provide you with an updated account of the lawsuit status. On June 24th, 2025, Franklin County Judge Jaiza Page ruled the EdChoice Private School voucher program unconstitutional on three accounts. As expected, the Ohio Attorney General appealed the case to the 10th District Court of Appeals. The paperwork from both sides is due tomorrow, January 13th, and oral arguments in the case should begin sometime in late spring or early summer. This means a decision should come later this year or early 2027.

VHO'S attorneys were confident in their strong case before Judge Page, and they were right. Judge Page ruled that EdChoice is unconstitutional because it creates a separate and unequal system of common schools open to a few, not all, children, and it siphons \$1.7 billion in public tax dollars over the next two years from an underfunded system of public schools, and it violates a clause in the Constitution that forbids public tax dollars from going to private religious schools.

Annually, a Hilliard community student who participates in the EDChoice voucher program receives between \$2,900 and over \$5,200 more than each student who attends Hilliard schools. The students for whom you pledge to advocate for and protect. As our administrators grapple with what services, what programs, what curriculums, what trainings, and which staff to prioritize and to eliminate due to dwindling state funding, remember who is on the receiving end of increased, uncapped, unaccountable state funding dollars for education – hundreds of students who have never set one foot in our schools. This is your time and this is your call to action. Thank you.

Don Thompson

Good evening, everyone. My name is Don Thompson. My wife and I are residents of Hilliard. This is the first Hilliard School Board meeting that I've attended. I have a two-page handout for circulation. I'm here tonight for two reasons, plus a suggestion for your consideration.

First of all, I commend the entire school leadership for your work in keeping the quality of education high. You received a four-star rating, and that's due to your leadership in the administration, as well as the support of parents and teachers.

The second reason I'm here is to ask for some insight on what local school advocates can do to gain and maintain a clear understanding of the complex subject of school finance at the highest level and at the district level. I'm not seeking answers tonight because it is such a vast topic, but I am encouraging some dialogue about the facts as we go forward on such topics as the school funding trend in recent years, in the foreseeable future, and reasons why our school funding formula remains unconstitutional...*unintelligible*...the impact of increasing funds allocated for private school vouchers, clarity with core performance, and many others because it is such a vast, complex subject.

You're the leaders, and you have the expertise to educate not only students but also adults. And so the suggestion that I make for your consideration is this: apply your expertise to develop a syllabus and host a series of educational seminars on the school funding subject, with the goal of educating school advocates on the elements of school funding in Ohio and the Hilliard district finances. Perhaps an eight or 10 Zoom sessions might be a good start. In May of last year, you presented the information. I encourage you to consider the proposal. I thank you for the opportunity to come and I certainly do thank you for maintaining quality in our schools.

E CONSENT AGENDA

The Board of Education approved the consent agenda, items E1 through E3. Action by the Board of Education in "Adoption of the Consent Agenda" means that all E items are adopted by one single motion unless a member of the board or the Superintendent requests that any such item be removed from the consent agenda and voted upon separately. Employments, where applicable, are contingent upon 1) Verification of education, 2) Proof of proper certification, and 3) Positive results from a criminal records check.

- E1 Approved the following Certified Personnel actions – See attachment to the Minutes.
- E2 Approved the following Classified Personnel actions – See attachment to the Minutes.
- E3 Approved the following trip requests:
 - a. Davidson Baseball, Louisville, KY – March 29, 2026

Mr. Perry congratulated and thanked the following retirees for their service:

Certificated Personnel Retirements:

- Lillian Forney has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/29/1994.
- Linda O’Dea has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/29/1994.
- Daniel Reese has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/26/2002.
- Lynn Seguin has been with Hilliard City Schools since 08/31/2001.

Classified Personnel Retirements:

- Ronald Schott has been with Hilliard City Schools since 07/31/2009.

F ACTION AGENDA

F1 The Board of Education approved the December 2025 Winter Graduates.

F2 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

AUTHORIZING GMP AMENDMENT NO. 2.1 FOR THE NEW BEACON ELEMENTARY SCOPE OF PHASE 1 OF THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

The Chief Operating Officer recommends the Board authorize the negotiation and execution of GMP Amendment No. 2.1 for the New Beacon Elementary scope of Phase I of the Capital Improvements Project with Ruscilli Construction Company, LLC.

Rationale:

1. The Board previously authorized an agreement with Ruscilli as the Construction Manager at Risk for the Project.
2. Ruscilli submitted its proposal for GMP Amendment No. 2.1 (“GMP 2.1”) in a total amount of \$27,899,895.
3. The Chief Operating Officer recommends the Board authorize the negotiation and execution of GMP 2.1 on behalf of the Board in an amount to not exceed \$27,899,895.

The Board of Education resolves as follows:

The Board hereby authorizes the Chief Operating Officer, Superintendent, Treasurer, and Board President to work with legal counsel to negotiate, finalize, and execute GMP No. 1 in an amount not to exceed \$27,899,895, and to execute any related documents on behalf of the Board.

F3 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

AUTHORIZING GMP AMENDMENT NO. 1.1 FOR THE WALKER ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (NEW BROWN) SCOPE OF PHASE I OF THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

The Chief Operating Officer recommends the Board authorize GMP Amendment No. 1.1 for the Walker Road Elementary School (New Brown) scope of Phase I of the Capital Improvements Project with Ruscilli Construction Company, LLC.

Rationale:

1. The Board previously authorized an agreement with Ruscilli as the Construction Manager at Risk for the Project.
2. Ruscilli submitted its proposal for GMP Amendment No. 1.1 for the New Brown Elementary Scope (“GMP 1.1”) in a total amount of \$27,522,494.
3. The Chief Operating Officer recommends the Board authorize the negotiation and execution of GMP 1.1 on behalf of the Board in an amount to not exceed \$27,522,494.

The Board of Education resolves as follows:

The Board hereby authorizes the Chief Operating Officer, Superintendent, Treasurer, and Board President to work with legal counsel to negotiate, finalize, and execute GMP 1.1 in an amount not to exceed \$27,522,494, and to execute any related documents on behalf of the Board.

Mr. Stewart: Your first couple of votes were doozies. What you just did was approve the guaranteed maximum price for both the Beacon Elementary Project and the new Brown Elementary Project. This is, I'm not going to call it a culmination 'cause the building isn't open yet. But this is a big milestone. We started with conceptual design, moved through schematic design and development, and refined things along the way.

I wanted to pause to thank some people. I know that our partners from Fanning Howey, Jen Fuller and Brandon Biddinger, and Mike Mancini from Ruscilli are here as well. So, we just shifted all the risk to Mike in that move. But they have been amazing partners. I certainly want to thank our Operations team, led by Mike McDonough and Mark Dungeon, as well as our partners with the city, for getting us to this point. The exciting part is that, after all this work, we now get to see shovels go into the ground and buildings come up. We'll be scheduling groundbreaking and other events here very soon. We're really entering a very exciting time for this district.

F4 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

AUTHORIZING MEMBERSHIP IN THE INCOMPLIANCE CONSULTING NATIONAL PURCHASING CONSORTIUM

The Chief Operating Officer recommends authorization of membership in the INCompliance Consulting National Purchasing Consortium (the "Consortium").

Rationale:

1. The Consortium is a national association of political subdivisions; and
2. The Board is eligible for membership, and wishes to participate, in the Consortium; and
3. Ohio Revised Code Section 9.48 authorizes boards of education, as political subdivisions, to participate in joint purchasing programs operated by or through a national or state association of political subdivisions in which the purchasing political subdivision is eligible for membership; and
4. The Chief Operating Officer has reviewed the membership agreement ("Agreement") for the Consortium and recommends that the Board authorize the Chief Operating Officer and Treasurer to execute the Agreement on behalf of the Board.

The Board of Education resolves as follows:

The Board authorizes its Chief Operating Officer and Treasurer to execute the Agreement on behalf of the Board.

F5 The Board of Education approved the following resolution:

AUTHORIZING AN AGREEMENT WITH PALMER CONSERVATION CONSULTING, LLC FOR COMMISSIONING SERVICES FOR THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT – PHASE I

The Chief Operating Officer recommends the Board authorize an agreement with Palmer Conservation Consulting, LLC (“Palmer”) to provide commissioning services for Phase I of the Capital Improvements Project (the “Project”).

Rationale:

1. Pursuant to Sections 153.65 through .71 of the Ohio Revised Code, the Board previously selected Palmer as the firm most qualified to provide commissioning services (“Services”) for the Project.
2. Palmer has proposed a fee of \$277,500 to provide the Services for the Project.
3. The Chief Operating Officer recommends the Board authorize an agreement with Palmer in an amount not to exceed \$277,500 (“Contract Sum”), and requests authority for the Chief Operating Officer and Treasurer, with the assistance of legal counsel, to negotiate and execute the agreement with Palmer on the Board’s behalf.

The Board of Education resolves as follows:

1. The Board authorizes an agreement with Palmer in an amount not to exceed the Contract Sum, and authorizes the Chief Operating Officer and Treasurer, with assistance of legal counsel, to negotiate and execute the agreement with Palmer on the Board’s behalf.
2. The Board authorizes the Chief Operating Officer and Treasurer to sign any other documents consistent with the intent of this resolution.

G REPORTS / INFORMATION / EXHIBIT ITEM

G1 Committee Reports

Ms. Arnold: Just a brief touch on facilities. We did actually meet last week with the team to review this GMP proposal. Great work to everybody who helped get these numbers in line with what we had anticipated or what we're expecting. I'm proud to be voting on this and so glad we're moving forward.

Mrs. Crowley: I forgot my notes about the academic committee because I was so excited about the swearing-in. So I'll give that report next month.

Mr. Perry: We have a policy committee meeting on the 15th for anyone who wants to attend. It is publicly available.

Mrs. Byler: I was excited. I got to go to my first committee meeting. I also went to facilities. I just wanted to say that I was excited to be there. I appreciate Mike extending the meeting a little longer to get me up to speed. And I was also excited to vote on this today. Very exciting to be breaking ground on these buildings. And just exciting to be working with our partners in this.

H EXECUTIVE SESSION / ADJOURNMENT

- H1 At 7:04 p.m., the Board of Education caucused to executive session to consider the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion, or compensation of a public employee or official.